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MY COMING OUT.

It was upon the 18th of November last that we received the invitation—Mr, Mrs, and Miss Smythe to dinner. I secreted the note to read alone when unseen. There was a demur about my going—how my heart sank; but it was decided before papa went out to see his patients that we should go. It was all Miss Smythe to me. I had a new dress bought, as white as blanchmange; my old ones were only fit for 'break-ups' at school; mamma would have treated my going as an indifferent matter, and no more than if it were baby coming into dessert, whereas it was my coming out, my first grown-up party—no, I was determined to have a new dress, and I got it. I dreamed about it every night; such curious dreams. There was one very handsome officer, with a sword, and a black moustache, who appeared to me three times, followed me all over the room, and would hold the pedal down for me with his foot, when I played. I do play. I began to believe in him the third time, and imparted the secret to my dearest friend, to whom I tell everything. The day came at last. I had a dreadful sore throat, but of course I did not tell anybody. I really had not patience to see papa making baby 'ride-a-cock-horse' (I should like to ask Darwin, what is a cock-horse?), as if nothing were going to happen. He little knew how soon he might be called upon to part with me to some one else, but then he had not dreamed. I could not help agreeing with Ann, who said: 'How well you do look, miss, to be sure!' And I did look well. My hair, a rich brown, from pomatum, in ringlets that looked as if nothing would bring them out, quite floated. But I must leave my appearance to your imagination; only, if I were somebody else who had to describe me that evening, I could do it well. My dress fortunately arrived in time; my kid gloves did not slit, when the brougham was at the door. Nobody was taken suddenly ill, and wanted papa—as generally happens when he is going anywhere. So far everything prospered my coming out. All the way there I thought over *Rules to be Observed when in Company*—a *Companion for the Dinner-table*, a book we used at Miss Coldstream's, where I was at school, and where we had to carry them into practice, at a large table, with very little upon it. How well I remember upsetting a potato, and being made an example of! Some of the rules at table were what every one knows, but it was the phraseology Miss Coldstream said was so refined. One was: 'Never attempt to hold converse with your voisin, while your bouche is rempli de viandes;' and one: 'Give a casual glance at your voisin, to observe if he is going to converse,

before raising the viands to your lips. It is better to manger en accord.' When we entered the drawing-room, they were in the twilight, and as the room was large, I could not see well. The lady of the house, who is very deaf, came and talked to me; but, as she heard everything wrong that I observed, it was uninteresting. She likewise brought the children, which I thought tiresome. We have two babies at home, twins, who are always wanted to be held, or played with, so I have enough of them; but they soon cried, and departed. Left to myself, my eyes wandered round the room. I heard papa's laugh. In *Rules to be Observed*, it says: 'Never laugh, only smile;' however, I suppose poor papa's education was completed before it came out. I ought to be thankful for my advantages. There appeared to be not a large number of people, but—yes! not far from me there was the gentleman with the black moustache, talking to a young lady in pink by the firelight. It must be the officer, devoid of the sword. Who does not believe in dreams? I do. I wished candles would come, that I might see him better, and that he might see me. I wondered how soon we should become intimate.

All at once, I was struck dumb by seeing a small figure in black standing by itself near a window. Suppose it should be a boy! It might be a man; some men were short, very short in stature. It might be a very young man. But a boy! I trembled; and why? some one may ask. Because, if it were a boy, I had a creeping presentiment he would 'take me in' (remember, it was the first time I ever had been 'taken in'). There was the boy by itself; here was I by myself. I turned away my eyes to the gentleman with the black moustache; but no! it would not do, while that undecided figure was in the room. There is a step; lamps are coming. Now for it! O yes! it is a boy, and a boy in jackets! downright jackets! not even those half-and-half species of garment, descending to the beginning of the leg. The gentleman with the black moustache never looks at me, even when it is light; no, it is still the lady on the ottoman; but dreams cannot be wrong three times, so my lady on the ottoman had better make the most of the present! Another step! a clanking, a fleshy odour! A very stout gentleman, who has been sitting opposite to me, looks up animatedly towards the door, rubs his hands, and smiles at me. I did not know whether to return his smile, as I had not been introduced. A very thin gentleman, who has been talking on prophecy to a lady with a blue nose, near me, sighs and looks dejected. I heard him ask for a 'very little, if you please,' at dinner. The gentleman with the black moustache glances anxiously at the hostess. The gentleman with the black moustache is requested to hook the lady with the blue nose; the

lady in pink is bestowed upon a gentleman with yellow whiskers; the very thin and the very stout gentlemen are disposed of. O horror! the boy is being brought my way. 'Gustavus, my dear, give your arm to Miss Smythe.' I could have cried—after all my dreams, after all my anticipations. However, there was no help for it but to take the little wretch's arm, and follow all the others down stairs. I had the most uncomfortable place at table (where it is all leg, and no more room allowed), except the boy's. The door opened right upon him, but he looked unabashed by anything, and kept saying to the waiters, when the door came harder than usual: 'I say, draw it mild, old fellow!' What was more annoying to me, was that I had the black moustache full in view, and papa nearly opposite; and the boy, who had not the lowest of voices, thought himself bound to talk: 'First party, eh? Thought so; mine too. (His, indeed!) Did not want me to come in; told 'em I'd be off to sea. The governor said you were coming, so mother dried her eyes, and it was all right. You see,' he continued, confidentially, 'things get so cold when they are brought out; besides, I want to bag a lot for some other fellows.' How I wished dinner was over, and I think the gentleman with the black moustache wished so too. 'I say,' continued the boy, 'that dish there is so jolly, have a little before that old fellow with the red face gets it all—he knows what's nice, I believe you.—Captain Rose' (very loud whisper)—the moustache quivered as if it were glued on—'will you help this young lady by me to some of *that*!—a good big piece;' and then to me, 'That red face shall be disappointed of more.'

What a mortifying dinner! The single consolation was, that the boy informed me, he did not care for drawing-rooms. Nobody else spoke to me; the boy was considered a sufficient companion! Why, O why were feelings invented! Once, in a pause, papa, who was talking to the mild hostess through a speaking-trumpet, and at whom Gustavus had grumbled for sending him a chicken-leg (he hated legs!), said: 'I see my young friend and Henrietta are getting on very well together; it is my little girl's first party.' I thought I had never heard papa's voice so loud, and through a trumpet. The lady replied in a mild voice, and smiling benevolently at us: 'Yes, Gussy is a very nice boy;' and then leaning over him: 'Gustavus, dear, don't take too much wine.'

After papa's speech, all was a blank to me. I have a vision of Gustavus taking too much wine, and growing noisy; then of a hasty signal to depart, from his mamma, and of my dress being torn by his chair; then of us ladies clustering round the fire (I on the outside, of course), and of the lady of the ottoman looking at herself in the mirror, very near, then retiring to a distant window, 'to look at the moon,' she said. I should perhaps have rejoiced when I heard it whispered that lovers were a great bore. I was attracted by that lady; she seemed something superior to me, and I felt very small beside her. Presently there was a buzz as of bees, and the gentlemen entered (not the boy), and my courage rose a little. I made a rush at a seat, which chanced to be by the lady who admired the moon. The gentleman with the black moustache sauntered up. Could it be to me at last? He certainly looked at me, but not with a glance of pleasure. 'How sweet the moon is!' murmured the lady. 'Sweets to the

sweet!' murmured the gentleman. The lady smiled, and she, too, looked at me. 'Let us play at chess,' said the lady, and accordingly (very stupid of me, I begin to think now) I sat and watched them arrange the pieces, which took a long time to come out of the box. While the lady's fingers were daintily holding a bishop's head, the gentleman would say, very low: 'Then you *do* like me the best, Arabella?' probably referring to Yellow Whiskers. The bishop made a few faltering steps, such as bishops ought not to take, and settled beside black moustache's queen. 'Do not be foolish, Captain Rose; besides, it does not matter at all. There—it's your move.' Captain Rose, unobservant of the queen, pushes on a pawn, *three*, and, in leaning over the board, to say earnestly: 'How can you be so cruel?' causes a general havoc, which rouses him. 'Do make that girl go, Arabella,' he says, in a whisper. 'Do you play?' says Arabella, turning to me. 'Yes,' I reply, through a very sore throat, and with a very husky voice, from long silence. 'Then do favour us,' says the mouth under the moustache (a little bit of one of my dreams coming true—but he only said it to get rid of me).

I accordingly *did* play, because I did not like to refuse, a brilliant piece of twenty pages, to which every one said a mechanical 'Thank you' *en masse*, and the gentleman with the red face (who woke up at the end, which was *fff*): 'Is that all?' I suppose I did it rather well, as, upon leaving the piano, and seating myself beside a very plainly dressed young lady, and a very young clergyman with a serious face (curate and nephew to the man on prophecy—with different views), who were talking about Sunday-schools, and what length the scholars' pinafores ought to be, the lady turned to me—'Could you play us something, dear,' she said, 'something mournful, if you know anything.' Of course she meant *play again*, and of course she did not want to be rid of me. Nobody makes love (*she would not flirt*) upon Sunday-schools and pinafores, do they? So I sat down and played again what *had* drawn tears, indeed, it always affected me, but I did not like to cry, when no one else did, and I heard the lady in pink laugh at a *sweet* part. Before I had quite reached the end, papa came up quickly (papa has no sort of *sympathy* for music)—'Come, Henrietta,' and he took me up to the hostess, who said I played very nicely, as if I were a school-girl! The last thing I saw was the figure of the lady in pink, still playing chess. It was aggravating to hear papa in going home: 'What a wretched dinner! so badly cooked;' and mamma's: 'Oh, my love, Mrs Brown has told me of a new biscuit for the babies.' Biscuit for the babies! Dinner! What was that to blighted hopes? However, I kept them to myself, and even told my dearest friend, when she asked me, that I was taken in (poor Amelia is not come out yet, and is anxious on those subjects) by a gentleman with plenty to say, and very attentive. 'What profession?' Amelia asked. 'None,' I replied; 'private gentleman.' Oh, do not blame me; in general, I avoid the topic.

Young ladies—to whom I now tell it for your good—who anticipate your coming out, moderate your expectations, even if you dream three times of a hero with a black moustache, for fear you get nothing more than a boy. Oh, givers of dinner-parties, knowing a young lady makes her *début* at your house, let there not be boys, or rather a boy, to take the youngest in

(bestow upon him rather a lady arrived at caps, who has boys of her own); and reject his threat of going off to sea with contempt.

A CUSTOM-HOUSE SALE.

We have before us the catalogue of the '148th Custom-house Sale by Auction,' of sundry commodities which in some mysterious way have become the property of the Queen. We have, moreover, been to see these commodities, and the sale-room, and the auctioneer, and the buyers, and we propose to speak about them.

If there were no import duties, there would be no Custom-house; if no Custom-house, no Custom-house sales. Therefore, the import duties are the groundwork of this matter. Let Mr Gladstone, or whoever may fill the important post of Chancellor of the Exchequer, propose a duty on a foreign commodity on entering this country; and let this be either for the sake of revenue, or for the 'protection' (as it used to be called) of native industry. Until the House of Commons agrees to this, all is in abeyance; but as soon as parliament grants this item of supply, the Commissioners of Customs are looked to by the government as the agents for its collection, and difficult work it is. There is a sort of loose morality afloat, that to cheat the government is not so bad as to cheat your neighbours; while some go so far as to say, or to act as if they had said, that it is not bad at all—unless found out.

There are various ways in which commodities come into the possession of the Commissioners of Customs, as trustees for the Crown, owing to some irregularity touching import duties. The *bonding*-system gives rise to one of these. The import duty need not be paid immediately on the landing of the commodity from the ship. Bonding warehouses are provided, in which such goods may be kept for a time, under lock and key; the importer may take them out when he likes, on paying the duty, and a small sum also for warehousing; but until he feels that the proper time has come for making a market of his goods, he may prefer to leave them 'in bond.' Sometimes there are large quantities of a particular article in bond at once, especially during a speculative mania. During the days of the corn-laws, there were often enormous quantities of foreign corn in the bonded granaries of London, Liverpool, and Hull; the owners waited and waited for a good turn of the market, then paid the duty, drew out the corn, and sold. But occasionally this 'good turn of the market' did not come till the corn was spoiled or the owners ruined. An instance was known in which 2000 quarters of corn were thrown into the Thames; the owner despaired of selling it at a price that would cover the duty, and he was tired of seeing the corn 'eat itself up' in granary-rent; while the Customs were bound to see that the corn should not be consumed by any one in this country until it had paid duty. Sometimes a million quarters of corn were liberated from bond in a single month, consequent on a favourable turn in the market. All this has, however, passed away; and we must look to other commodities for illustrations of the bonding-system. Tobacco furnishes one such, of a very notable kind. This article pays a large import duty. The average value of all the qualities imported, including shipping charges, is about sixpence per pound; on this a duty of more than three shillings is imposed! When the duty was still higher, tobacco of so low a quality even as twopence-halfpenny per pound paid four shillings duty, or nineteen hundred per cent. Cigars pay more than nine shillings a pound duty; but the really foreign cigars imported make up but a small proportion of the tobacco which brings in revenue. The importers of course do not wish to pay the enormous duty until a period as near as possible to the day when they can sell and obtain money or the representative of money. Hence it sometimes

happens that there are more than twenty thousand hogsheads of tobacco in the Queen's warehouses at the London Docks alone at one time, under control of the Customs until the duty is paid. Samples may pass from hand to hand, to facilitate dealings; but the authorities take good care that this shall not be made a means or excuse for the evasion of duty. Tobacco is frequently injured on the voyage, through leaky vessels or other causes. If the duty were small, the owner might decide to pay it, and take his chance of making a market of the damaged portion; but the duty is higher than the price at which any damaged tobacco can be sold, and, therefore, he gives it up as lost. Damaged or undamaged, the Commissioners will not let it leave the warehouse unless the duty be paid; the owner won't pay on the damaged portion; and, therefore, it is committed to the flames. In one corner of the warehouse, an inscription directs us 'To the Kiln'—jocularly called the 'Queen's tobacco-pipe.' The hogsheads are opened; the tobacco is released in one solid mass; the damaged exterior is chopped off with hatchets; the sound tobacco is put up again into the hogsheads; and the damaged fragments are thrown into the kiln. The smoke is carried up as high into the air as the chimney will convey it, and the ashes are worth a trifle as manure for farm-land. This royal tobacco-pipe is not fastidious as to the articles with which it is fed; although primarily intended to smoke its own tobacco, it has been known to smoke damaged hams and damaged French kid-gloves.

So far, then, in relation to bonded goods; and we need here only add that, as such goods occasionally fail to find any claimants at all, the Customs sell them, in order that they may not absolutely spoil by keeping.

Another class of goods is that which has been undoubtedly smuggled—brought to our shores secretly, in the hope that it may pass without duty. It matters not whether it is a cask of brandy run on the coast on a dark night, or a parcel of lace ingeniously concealed in the mysterious recesses of a lady's garments, or a box of cigars innocently reposing at the bottom of a tourist's portmanteau: no matter which; it has been smuggled, and is seized accordingly.

A third class illustrates a mode in which her Majesty the Queen is enabled to catch overunning people in their own trap. When goods are admitted at an *ad valorem* duty—that is, on a percentage of the value, without reference to number, weight, or bulk—the owner is permitted to name the value, and the duty is calculated upon that basis. But if the officers, who are sharp-eyed and sharp-witted men, expert at their business through long practice, have reason to believe that the value has been considerably understated, as a means of evading duty, they take the owner at his word; they buy the article in the Queen's name, at the price stated; the law places the owner in their power under such circumstances, and he is obliged to sell whether he will or no. It is a lesson to him; he does not again send in an undervalue, for he finds it a losing speculation.

In these, and in minor ways that need not be traced in detail, miscellaneous commodities accumulate in the hands of the Commissioners of Customs; and from time to time an auctioneer is employed to sell them. Miscellaneous indeed the assemblage is; and we have to poke about in many holes and corners to get a sight of it. Some are in the East Warehouse at the Custom-house; some in the East Cellar; some in the West Cellar; some in the London Docks, others in the St Katherine's and West India Docks; while the Tobacco ground at Rotherhithe contains the largest, roughest, and clumsiest articles.

Who makes up the lots, whether the auctioneer or an official, we know not; but in some instances, they are oddly assorted. On what principle, for instance,

are 'six boxes of needles' combined with 'one accordion and thirteen pounds uncoloured prints?' Perhaps all were included in one forfeiture or seizure. Here is an unusually large and handsome harmonium, or 'Symphonista Gucheneé,' and near this are 'nine gross of rosaries'—doubtless very poor and common, but still efficacious in the eyes of those who use them for counting their prayers. So many gross of braid, and so many of trimmings, so many dozen brooch-pieces, and so many embroidered handkerchiefs, collars, and cuffs, are plain enough to understand; and so are several cases of white earthenware, not so good as English, but still serviceable. We can understand, too, fifty musical-boxes and a square piano in one lot; braids, gloves, and artificial flowers in another; pistols, muskets, and carbines in a third; two hundred and fifty pounds of straw for plaiting; and twenty pair of boot-tops; and six cubic feet of children's toys. But here is a lot which puzzles one to understand, almost as much as it puzzled Pope to guess how flies get into amber; the things are there, but how did they get into companionship? Let us see—four pounds of steel cutlery, three pounds of tobacco-pipes, two porcelain-pipes, eighteen cartridge-boxes, fourteen bonbon-papers, a box of toys, a sample of linen, a sample of carpeting, a sample of cotton, four mounted walking-canes, six pounds of confectionary, and two pounds of 'perished' pastry. Nor is it easier to conjecture how much such a lot is worth, or what kind of person would buy it.

Here is a lot that evidently formed the 'personalities' of some unfortunate fellow who found the Customs' duties a bar to his progress. It comes under the official designation of 'rummage;' let etymologists determine what the word means, but the thing meant is a commodity which has not been called for or demanded by the person to whom it belongs, and which is put up for sale, that it may no longer cumber the place. A chest of old wearing-apparel, a bundle of similar kind, a box of shells, a case of photographs, a port-manteau and a bag filled with odds-and-ends, a *Continental Bradshaw*, and a well-worn greasy hat in a hat-box—all these look like the 'luggage' of some traveller from foreign parts. An open letter is in the hat; and the Customs' people religiously allow it to remain there, for it belongs to the Queen until somebody buys it with the rest of the chattels. It is a good letter at heart, though badly written: 'DEAR SIR i drs yo with a feu lines and thank you for all feavers and i hope you will be happy in this world and that to com i am sory that you left me i have lost a frend but god bles you and sen y prosperity i remain yours ever'—Let this suffice; the name of the grateful writer is no business of ours.

Some of the lots would go far to set up a shop. Imagine the proud position of the buyer of '460 sou-westers,' or '1134 pounds of chocolate,' or 'fourteen cwt. of plain china-ware,' or 'seven crates of green glass bottles.' It does not appear that 'two drums for coiling telegraph wires' would be of much value without the wires themselves; nor can we easily imagine what any reasonable man could do with fourteen cwt. of Barbary root.

Let us now, quitting the warehouses and cellars in which the commodities are exposed to view, turn to the auction-room where the sales are effected. This is not at the Custom-house, nor at any government establishment; it is simply a room hired for two or three days at the Commercial Sale-rooms in Mincing Lane—the head-quarters of the wine, grocery, and drug trades. By twelve o'clock, when the sale commences, this room is crammed; and it is impossible to look round without seeing how strongly the Hebrew element is there represented; the names of Lazarus, Barnett, Joseph, Lyons, and the like, are soon heard to issue from the lips of the auctioneer. None of the commodities are there—not a single lot; every man has a catalogue, and nearly every man has it clearly

in intention to make a bidding for some particular lot or lots. There could perhaps not be found anywhere a body of persons better versed in the actual current value of all sorts of things. Each man keeps his own counsel as to the maximum bidding which he will make; he has seen the commodities at the warehouses, docks, and cellars; he knows almost exactly for what he could sell them, or some of them, if he had them; and he lays his plans accordingly. Everybody in the room seems to know everybody else; everybody notes down the price at which every lot sells; and an immense deal of chaffing goes on when an outsider ventures to bid. The auctioneer knows his audience well; he has a quick eye and a decisive manner; he devotes about a minute to each lot, and allows no appeal against any of his 'knockings-down.'

The conditions of sale mark some of the diversities in the way in which the commodities have become the property of the Crown. Some of the lots are marked 'for home consumption,' and 'U. V.:' that is, they have been undervalued by the owner, and purchased by the Crown at that value; they may be bought by anybody, and no duty is payable by the buyer. In most of such lots the Crown names a minimum price, below which they will not be sold. This price is such as will cover all expenses, with a little over. But sometimes it happens that the officers have formed a wrong estimate of the saleable qualities of a particular article; the original owner may have been nearly right after all; the minimum at the sale is established too high; no biddings are made; and that lot has to be put up again at some subsequent sale. In nearly every case, however, the lot finds a purchaser at a price higher than the minimum named by the authorities. L.1, 11s. seems a very small reserve or minimum to name for five pistols, and L.5 a still smaller for thirty muskets; but doubtless the quality bore a fair relation to such prices; and when the two hundred eager watchers in the room allowed one of their number to buy the muskets at about five shillings each, it may be inferred that they knew what they were about. It may be that—like the razors celebrated in one quarter, and the green spectacles in another—these muskets were made 'to sell.'

Some of the lots, similarly entered for home consumption, may be had at 'buyers' prices.' The articles have in some way been forfeited; the Crown has not paid anything for them; and therefore the competitors are allowed to begin at as low a bidding as they please. And they do begin low, with a vengeance. Imagine the 'brass' of the man who could offer five shillings for the nine gross of rosaries; and of him who bid the same sum for fifteen gross of braid; and ten shillings for twenty-four dozen of brooch-pieces; and ten shillings for more than eight thousand capsules. Sometimes the biddings creep up by shillings from these low beginnings; but occasionally, as if ashamed of what seems nothing better than an attempt to 'gammon' the auctioneer and all else in the room, a bidder will rise at once to a respectable bidding—a proceeding for which he is rewarded with jeers and 'Oh, ohs!'

Other commodities at the sale are 'for exportation or for home consumption,' and are purchasable on condition that the buyer pays the duty. The bidders for such lots must know what they are about; they must ascertain what is the rate of duty, and must be alive to all the machinery of Customs' routine. The prices at which such lots often sell seem ridiculously low. Huge parcels of books and printed paper go for a trifle; but then there is duty to pay. One outrageous individual commenced with a bidding of one shilling for nearly three thousand five hundred dice; others ran up the lot to two guineas; but even that price amounted only to about half a farthing each. Until we take into account, however, what is the duty payable on dice, these

prices remain without significance to us. One lot of 'rummage,' on which duty was to be paid by the buyer, consisted of articles so heterogeneous, that it is not easy to see what kind of buyer would understand how to make a market of them all—unmanufactured ores, untanned seal-skins, cured herrings, shoe-lasts, boot-trees, sheep's wool, bricks and tiles, nails, cement, glue, bread, bones, and 'one pair of slippers.'

Passing over an 'Arnott's stove with stone fittings,' an 'oak staircase sixteen feet high,' a 'box with two hundred and eighteen old padlocks,' 'five bundles of old gauging instruments,' and other queer odds and ends, we come to the larger items of cigars, sugar, and rum. Of these there were many lots, of convenient bulk for trade, and on each of which the buyers would be expected to pay the duty. Ten or a dozen pounds of cigars in one lot, four or five casks of unrefined sugar, a few gallons of brandy, ten or twenty gallons of rum, and the same of wine—such were about the sizes of the lots. Some of the cigars were 'rummage,' put up at buyers' prices; some were 'seizures,' put up at 9s. 6d. per pound, about a penny or so more than the duty.

Some of the articles exhibited at the Tobacco ground at Rotherhithe were of a curious kind, seemingly having very little to do with Customs' duties. What kind of smuggling, or rummage, or seizure could be expected to apply to such things as 'a ship's boat,' 'a large iron buoy and two pieces of chain-cable,' 'an anchor without a stock, a kedge-anchor, and three pieces of chain-cable,' 'a broken anchor,' 'a piece of broken mast,' 'a brass gangway stanchion,' 'an eight-oared river-galley,' and 'an unserviceable four-oared boat.' It appears, however, that to all such lots the mark D. or R. D. is affixed, meaning 'Derelict' and 'River Derelict.' They are articles which have been picked up at sea or in rivers, under circumstances which render them the property of the Crown; and they are disposed of at the Custom-house sales. The Crown names a minimum price; and then the bidders decide for themselves how much they will go beyond. Whether the eight-oared galley is worth more than five pounds, or a seven cwt. anchor and four fathoms of chain-cable more than three pounds, or a ship's lower yard more than one pound—these are questions for the buyer to decide.

When all is about to be wound-up, and the auctioneer and his customers about to leave—then comes the final lot—'The catalogues remaining unsold, per pound-weight, at buyers' price' and so ends a Custom-house Sale.

THE WILD HUNTRESS.

CHAPTER XCI.—ASSUMING THE DISGUISE.

WE again rode for the upper cañon of the Huerfano, keeping along the bank of the stream. Ten miles further on, we came to the forking of two trails—the more southern one leading up the Cuchada to the pass of Sangre de Chisto. By it had the gold-seekers gone in company with the dragoons—the latter *en route* for the new military post of Fort Massachusetts; the former no doubt intending to take the line of the Gila or Mohave to their still distant destination—the gold-bearing placers of California.

Above its upper cañon, the Huerfano bends suddenly to the north; and up its banks lies the route to Robideau's Pass—the same taken by the Mormon train.

We had no difficulty in following their trail. The wheel and hoof tracks had cut out a conspicuous road, and the numbers of both shewed that the party was a large one—much larger than our previous information had led us to anticipate. This was of little consequence—since in any case we could not have used force in the accomplishment of our design. I

regarded it rather as a favourable circumstance. The greater the multitude, the less likelihood of an individual being closely observed or speedily missed.

We reached Robideau's Pass as the sun was sinking over the great plain of San Luis. Within the pass we came upon the ground of the Mormon encampment. It had been their halting-place of the night before. The wolves prowled among the smouldering fires, whose half-burnt fagots still sent up their wreaths of filmy smoke.

We now knew the history of the captured wagon and slain teamsters. Our guide had learned it from the Utah messenger. It had belonged to the Mormons; who, at the time the Arapahoes made their attack, were only a short distance in the advance. Instead of returning to the rescue of their unfortunate comrades, their dread of the Indians had caused them to yield ready obedience to the Napoleonic motto, *saute qui peut*; and they had hurried onward without making stop, till night overtook them in the Robideau Pass.

This version enabled me to explain what had appeared to me rather strange conduct on the part of the escort. The character of the victims to the Arapahoe attack would in some measure account for the indifference of the dragoons. With the safety of the Mormons, they had no concern; and would be likely enough to leave them to their fate. But the guide had ascertained that both gold-diggers and dragoons—disgusted with their saintly *compagnons du voyage*—had separated from them; and having gone far ahead, in all probability, knew nothing of the sanguinary scene that had been enacted in the valley of the Huerfano.

We resolved to pass the night on the ground of the deserted encampment. By our guide's information—received from the runner—the Mormons were about thirty miles in advance of us. They were encamped on the banks of the Rio del Norte, there awaiting the answer of the Utah chief. That we should ourselves deliver on the following day.

Having given the *coyotés* their *congé*, we proceeded to pitch our buffalo-tents. A brace of these, borrowed from the friendly Utahs, formed part of the packing of our mules. One was intended for the use of the huntress-maiden—the other to give lodgment to the rest of our party. Not but that all of us—even Marian herself—could have dispensed with such a shelter. We had another object in thus providing ourselves. It might be necessary to travel some days in the company of the Saints: in that case, the tents would serve not only for shelter, but as a place of concealment. The opaque covering of skins would protect us from the too scrutinising gaze of our fellow-travellers; and in all likelihood we—the hunters of the party—should stand in need of such privacy to readjust our disguises—disarranged in the chase. Under cover of the tents, we could renew our toilet without the danger of being intruded upon. Chiefly for this reason, then, had we encumbered ourselves with the skin lodges.

As yet, we had not assumed our Indian disguises. The opening scene of the travestie was reserved for the morning.

At daybreak, it commenced; Peg-leg acting as principal *costumier*. The Taos trapper needed no disguise. Unknown to the Mormons, they would have no suspicions about him; and he could act as their guide in his Mexican costume. This left him free to give his services to the rest of us, and assist in our heraldic emblazonment.

My own features, sufficiently pronounced, rendered it all the more easy to make an Indian of me; and a uniform coat of vermilion over my neck, face, and hands, transformed me into a somewhat formidable warrior. The buckskin hunting tunic, leggings, and moccasins concealed the remainder of my skin; and the horse's tail, craftily united to my own dark tresses,

with the plumed bonnet and drooping crest over all, completed a costume that would have done me credit at a Parisian *bal-masqué*.

With equal facility was accomplished the metamorphosis of the young backwoodman; but not so easily that of Sure-shot. The *nez retroussé*, thin yellow hair, and green-gray eyes, appeared to be insurmountable obstacles to the Indianising of the ex-rifeman. Peg-leg, however, proved an artist of skill. The *chevelure* of Sure-shot, well saturated with charcoal-paste, assumed a different hue. A black circle around each eye neutralised the tint of both iris and pupil. To his face was given a ground-coat of red ochre; while some half-dozen dark stripes, painted longitudinally over it, and running parallel to the nose, extinguished the snub—transforming the Yankee into as good an Indian as any upon the ground!

Marian was her own 'dresser'; and while we were engaged outside, was making her toilet within the tent. Her costume would require but little alteration; it was Indian already. Her face alone needed masking; and how was that to be done?

To speak the truth, I was apprehensive upon the score of her disguise. I could not help dwelling on the fearful fate that awaited her, should the counterfeits be detected, and the girl identified. All along, I had felt uneasy about this; and had been endeavouring to devise some scheme by which to avoid the imprudence of her presenting herself in the Mormon camp. But the thought of Lilian—the perilous situation in which she was placed—perhaps more than all, the selfishness of my own love, had hindered me from thinking of any definite alternative.

When I saw the huntress-maiden issue forth from her tent, her face purpled with the juice of the *allegria* berries—her cheeks exhibiting, each a circle of red spots—while a line of similar markings extended across her forehead, I no longer felt fear for the result. Though the hideous tattooing could not hide the charms of her speaking countenance, it had so changed its expression, that even Wingrove himself would not have recognised her! More like was it to baffle the scrutiny of father and false husband.

We were now all dressed for the drama; and, after making a *caché* of our cast-off garments, we struck tents, and moved forward to the performance.

The faithful Wolf accompanied us. It was against my wish, and contrary to the counsel of our guide; but Marian would not part with a companion that more than once had protected her from cruel enemies.

The dog had been disguised, as the rest of us. Shorn of his shaggy coat, with his tail trimmed smooth as that of a greyhound—his skin, moreover, stained Indian fashion—there was but slight chance that the animal would be recognised.

CHAPTER XCII.

THE MORMON TRAIN.

A few hours' ride brought us to the western end of the pass; when, rounding a spur of the mountain, a wide plain was suddenly displayed to our view.

'Mira!' exclaimed the Mexican, '*el campamento de los Judíos!*' (Behold! the encampment of the Jews!)

The guide halted as he spoke. The rest of us followed his example—as we did so, gazing in the direction to which he pointed.

The plain that stretched before us was the grand *valle* of San Luis; but presenting none of those characteristics which we usually associate with the word 'valley.' On the contrary, its surface was perfectly level—having all the aspect of a sleeping sea; and with the white filmy haze suspended over it, it might easily have been mistaken for an expanse of ocean water.

At first sight, it appeared to be bounded only by

the horizon; but a keen eye could perceive its western rim—in the dim outlines of the Sierra San Juan, backed by the brighter summits of the 'Silver' Mountains (*Sierra de la Plata*). More conspicuous on the north were the wooded slopes of the Sierras Mojada and Sawatch; while right and left towered the snow-covered peaks of Pike and the Watoyah, like giant sentinels guarding the approach to this fair mountain-girt valley.

These details were taken in at a single *coup d'œil*, and in the same glance the eye was caught by the sheen of real water, that, like a glittering cord, sinuously extended through the centre of the plain. Under the dancing sunbeams, it appeared in motion; and curving repeatedly over the bosom of the level land, it resembled some grand serpent of sparkling convolutions, that had just issued from the mysterious mountains of the 'Silver Sierra,' and was slowly and gently gliding on towards the distant sea.

From the elevation on which we stood, we could trace its tortuous windings almost to the distant Sierra of San Juan; and in the concavity of one of these—almost upon the verge of our vision—we beheld '*el campamento de los Judíos.*'

Unprepared for it, we should never have thought of taking what we saw for an encampment of Mormons, or men of any kind. Under the white filmy veil that floated over the plain, some half-dozen little spots of a more intensified white were barely visible. These the Mexican pronounced to be '*los carros*' (the wagons).

I had recovered my pocket-glass, and this was now called into requisition. A glance through it enabled me to confirm the trapper's statement. The white spots were wagon-covers: they could be none other than the tilts of the Mormon train.

I could make out only some half dozen of them; but there were others behind these. They were clumped, or, more likely, *corralled* upon the plain. This, indeed, was evident from their arrangement. Those seen were set in a regular row, with their sides towards us, forming, no doubt, one quarter of the '*corral.*'

I looked for living forms. These were also visible under the glass—men and animals. Of the latter, a large drove of different kinds and colours could be seen, mottling the plain at some distance from the wagons. The men were moving about the vehicles—women I could also distinguish by their dresses; but the distance was too great for me to note the occupations of either sex—even by the aid of the magnifying lens. Lilliputians they looked—both men and women—while the horses and cattle might have been mistaken for a pack of curs.

It mattered not to us to know their occupation, nor even what they might be doing when we should arrive upon the ground. We had no intention of stealing upon them. Confident in our complete *déguisement*, we intended to ride boldly forward—if need be, into the very middle of their camp.

It was now the hour of noon; and we halted to bivouac. Although the distance that separated us from the Mormon camp was still considerable, we were in no hurry to advance. We had formed the resolution not to join company with the Saints, until near sunset. We knew that there would be curious eyes upon us; and in the hour of twilight we should be less exposed to their scrutiny. True, we might have joined them in the night, and passed off our counterfeits semblance with still greater security. But the morning would bring fresh light, with curiosity unsatisfied, and that would be more disadvantageous.

Half an hour of observation, and the novelty of our arrival would wear off. For this the half hour twilight would be the best time. No doubt, they had met many parties of friendly Indians while crossing the great plains? There had been some among their travelling companions. They would scarce consider us a curiosity?

We had another reason for reaching their encampment before nightfall: we wanted a few minutes of light to take the bearings of the *corral*, and get acquainted with the *topography* of the surrounding plain. Who could tell what chance might turn up in our favour? An opportunity might occur that very night—as likely as afterwards, and perhaps under more favourable circumstances. We had no desire to enter upon our engagement as guide and hunters. We should be but too willing to abandon the rôle, even before beginning it.

The last rays of the setting sun were sparkling on the selenite of the Silver Mountains, as we approached the encampment of the Saints. We were now near enough to make out the dimensions of the caravan. There were about a score of the large tilted wagons (Troy and Conestoga), with several smaller vehicles (Dearborns and Jerseys). The latter, with springs, were no doubt the more luxurious travelling carriages of such Saints as may have been in easier circumstances at home; while the ox-drawn 'Conestogas' belonged to the common crowd. With the larger wagons, a 'corral' had been formed, as is the usual custom of the prairie caravan.

In the following fashion is the enclosure constructed:—The two front wagons are drawn side by side, and halted close together. The two that follow next on the trail, are driven up outside of these—until their front wheels respectively touch the hind ones of the pair that precede them—when they also stop. The pair following in their turn double their poles upon these; and so on, till half the train is expended. The enclosure is not yet complete. It forms only a half-circle, or rather a semi-ellipse; and the corresponding half is obtained by a slight change in the mode of bringing up the remaining vehicles. These are driven forward to the ground, so that the rear of each is turned *inward*—the reverse of what was observed in bringing the others into place—and the double curve which before was constantly diverging, now becomes convergent. When all the wagons have got into their places, the ellipse will be completed; but it is customary to leave an *open* space at the end—a sort of avenue by which the enclosure may be entered. When horses and cattle require to be *corralled*, this entrance can be closed, by simply stretching a rope across it. If danger be apprehended, the travellers can keep within this enclosure—the bodies of the wagons forming an excellent rampart of defence. The tilts serve as tents; and under their capacious covering the female members of the emigrant's family are accustomed to sleep in comfort and security. Sentinels outside, and horse-guards picketed still further off, give warning of the approach of an enemy.

As we drew near the Mormon camp, we could perceive that in this approved fashion had they constructed their *corral*. Most of the lighter vehicles were inside the enclosure; and there we could see the forms of women and children moving about in an excited manner, as if they had retreated thither on discovering our approach.

The men still remained outside, and the horses and horned cattle had been left undisturbed. Our party was not large enough to create an alarm—even had our arrival been unexpected. It could scarcely have been so. No doubt they took us for what we were: the emissaries of the Utah chief!

When within a few hundred yards of the camp, a party, already on horseback, came trotting towards us. Archilete had hoisted a piece of white lawn-skin on his gun-rod—the world-known symbol of peace, and so understood by the red men of America. A towel or table-cloth, or something of the sort, was held up in answer; and after that the mounted Mormons spurred forward to meet us.

When we were within a dozen lengths of each other, both parties reined up; and the Mexican and Mormon leader, separating from their respective

followers, approached one another, shook hands, and entered into conversation.

What they said was simple enough. I could hear the trapper declaring in broken English the nature of our errand—that he had been sent by Wa-ka-ra to act as their guide; and that we, his *compañeros*, were the Utah hunters, to provide game for the caravan.

Of the Mormons who rode up to us there were half-a-dozen in all; and I was fain to hope that they were not a fair specimen of the emigrant party.

They were not—as I afterwards ascertained: they were the *Danites*, or *Destroying Angels*, that accompanied the train. 'Destroying devils' would have been a more appropriate appellation: for six more villainous-looking individuals I had never beheld. There was no sign of the angelic, neither in their eyes nor features—not a trace; but, on the contrary, each might have passed for an impersonation of the opposite character—a very 'devil incarnate'!

Five of them I had never seen before—at least to remember them. The sixth only on one occasion; but him I remembered well.

The man who had once looked in the face of the ex-attorney's clerk, and *ci-devant* schoolmaster of Swampville, was not likely soon to cast that countenance from his remembrance. It was Stebbins who was talking to the Mexican.

The dialogue was of brief duration. The tale told by the trapper was scarcely news: it had been expected; and was therefore accepted without suspicion.

The interview ended by Stebbins pointing to a place where we might pitch our tents—outside the wagon enclosure, and near the bank of the river.

This was just what we desired; and, proceeding direct to the spot, we commenced unpacking our paraphernalia.

CHAPTER XCIII.

THE CORRALLED CAMP.

As soon as our quality was known, the Saints came crowding around us. The corral poured forth its contents—until nine-tenths of the whole caravan, men, women, and children, stood gazing upon us with that stare of idiotic wonder peculiar to the humbler classes of countries called civilised.

We managed to withstand the ordeal of their gaze, with an assumed air of true savage indifference. Not without an effort, however: since it was difficult to resist laughing at the grotesque exclamations and speeches which our appearance and movements elicited from these wondering yokels.

We were cautious not to notice their remarks—as if we understood them not. Peg-leg, by the aid of his Anglo-American jargon—picked up among the 'mountain-men'—was able to satisfy them with an occasional reply. The rest of us said nothing; but, apparently in earnest occupation with our affairs, turned our eyes on them only by stealth.

I could perceive that Marian was the chief attraction; and for a moment my apprehensions were sufficiently keen. She had done nothing to disguise her sex—the mask extending no further than her face and features. Her neck, hands, and wrists—all of her skin that might be exposed—were stained Indian of course; and there would have been little likelihood of their discovering the false epidermis under a casual observation. Had it been a mere ordinary person—painted as she was—she might have passed for an Indian without difficulty. As it was, however, her voluptuous beauty had tempted a closer scrutiny; and, spite of her disfigured face, I saw glances directed upon her expressive of secret but passionate observation.

Some of the bystanders took no pains to conceal their predilection.

'Darnationed likely squaw!' remarked one. 'Who air she, old timber-toes?' inquired he, addressing himself to the guide.

'Squaw—Utah gal,' replied the Mexican in his trapper patois. Pointing to me, he continued: 'She sister to hunter-chief—she hunter too—kill big-horn, buffalo, deer. *Currambo! Si!* She grand *caza-dora!*'

'Oh! durn yer kezadora. I don't know what that ere means; but I do know, an' rayther calculate if that ere squaw had the scrubbin'-brush an' a leetle soft soap over that face o' hern, she'd look some punkins, I guess.'

The fellow who had thus eloquently delivered himself was one of the six who had saluted us on our arrival. Two or three of his *confrères* were standing beside him—gazing with lynx, or rather wolf-like glances upon the girl. Stebbins himself, before parting, had cast upon her a look of singular expression. It was not significant of recognition; but rather of some thought of viler origin.

The others continued to give utterance to their mock admiration; and I was glad, as the girl herself appeared to be, when the tent was pitched, and she was able to retire out of reach of their rude ribaldry.

We had now an opportunity of studying the Mormons *chez eux mêmes*: for not one of them had the slightest idea that their talk was understood by us. Most of them appeared to be of the humbler class of emigrants—farm-people, or those of mechanical calling—artisans of the common trades—shoemakers, blacksmiths, joiners, and the like. In the countenances of these there was no cast that betrayed a character, either of particular saintliness or sin. In most of them, the expression was simply stolid and bovine; and it was evident that these were the mere cattle of the herd.

Among them could be observed a sprinkling of a different sort of Saints—men of more seeming intelligence, but with less moral inclinations—men of corrupt thoughts and corrupt lives—perhaps once gentle, but now fallen—who had adopted this pseudo-religion in the expectation of bettering their temporal rather than spiritual condition.

The influence of these last over the others was quite apparent. They were evidently chiefs—bishops or deacons—'tenths' or 'seventies.' It was singular enough to see dandies among them; and yet, however ludicrous the exhibition, dandyism was there displayed! More than one 'swell' strutted through the crowd in patent-leather boots, Parisian silk hat, and coat of shining broadcloth. The temporary halt had offered an opportunity for this display of personal adornment; and these butterflies had availed themselves of the advantage, to cast for a few hours the chrysalis of their travelling gear!

The women were of all ages; and it might be added, of all nations. Several European tongues mingled in the *mélée* of sounds; but the one which predominated was that language without vowels—the jargon of the Welsh Principality.

The continual clacking of this unspeakable tongue told that the sons and daughters of the Cymri mustered strongest in the migration. Many of the latter wore their picturesque native costume—the red hooded cloak and kirtle; and some were unspeakably fair, with the fine white teeth, fair complexion, and ruddy cheeks, common to other branches of the Celtic race, but nowhere so characteristic as among the fair maidens of Cambria. It was, no doubt, those sweet shining faces, wreathed with free artless smiles, that had caused the lady-killers to unpack their portmanteaus.

My own eyes dwelt not upon these. Ever since our arrival upon the ground, I had been watching with keen glances the opening that led into the corral. Every one who came forth—man or woman—had been the object of my scrutiny.

But my glances had been given in vain; and were not rewarded by the recognition of a single individual. The entrance was about two hundred yards from the place where our tents were being pitched; but even at that distance I should have recognised the colossal squatter. As for Lilian, my heart's instinct would have declared her identity at the most casual glance.

Neither father nor daughter had yet made their appearance outside the enclosure; though all the world beside had come freely forth, and many were going back again!

It was strange, to say the least, they should act so differently from the others. She, I knew, was very different from the 'ruck' that surrounded her; and yet one would have thought that curiosity would have tempted her forth—that simple childlike inclination, natural in one so young, to witness our wild attire—to gaze on our plumes and our paint?

I could less wonder at Holt himself being insensible to such attraction; but in her it seemed strange.

My astonishment increased, as form after form passed out from the opening, but not that for which my eyes were searching. It ceased to be astonishment; it grew into chagrin; and after that assumed the character of an apprehension.

This apprehension I had already entertained, but in a less definite form. It now shaped itself into a cruel doubt—the doubt of *her being there*—either inside the corral, or anywhere in the Mormon camp!

After all, had we taken the wrong track? Might not Holt have kept on with the gold-diggers? The story of the Chicasaw signified nothing. Might not Lilian, under the protection of that gallant dragon, with the torn tassels—might not she?—

'It is quite probable,' I muttered to myself, 'highly probable that they are not here! The squatter may have resisted the will of his Apostolic companion; and, separating himself from the Mormon party, have gone on with the diggers? No! yonder! Holt himself, as I live!'

The exclamatory phrases were called forth by the appearance of a man in the opening between the wagons. He was standing still; and must have reached the spot he occupied but the moment before—when my eyes for an instant had been turned away. The Herculean frame, and great rufous beard hanging over his breast, proclaimed to my eyes the identity of the Tennessean squatter; and the costume confirmed it. It was precisely the same worn by him on that eventful morning—when standing before me with his long rifle raised against my life. The ample surcoat of greenish blanket-cloth, a little further faded—the red shirt underneath—the coarse horse-skin boots rising to his thighs—the crimson kerchief turbaned around his head, its loose flap falling down over his shaggy eyebrows—were all identical with the portrait remaining in my memory.

I watched him with eager eye. Was it his intention to step nearer and examine us? or had he come forth upon some other business?

He was looking grave, and sad, I thought; but in the distance I could scarce note the expression upon his countenance. It did not appear to betoken curiosity. Once only he glanced towards us, and then turned his eyes in an opposite direction. This did not shew that he cared much for our presence, or was in any wise interested in it. In all likelihood, he shared not the childish curiosity of his travelling companions—to whom he in other respects bore but little resemblance. As he stood in their midst, he looked like some grim but majestic lion, surrounded by curs or jackals. His behaviour suggested a further similitude to the great forest monarch. He seemed to hold no converse with those around him; but stood apart and for the moment motionless as a statue. Once only I noticed that he yawned; stretching out his colossal arms, as if to aid in the involuntary action. For this purpose,

and this alone, did he appear to have come forth: since, shortly after its accomplishment, he turned back into the avenue, and disappeared behind the barricade of the wagons!

CHAPTER XCIV.

BEAUTY EMBROWNED.

The apparition—for it had something of the character of one—restored my equanimity. Holt was with the Mormon train; and of course Lilian was there.

It may seem strange that this knowledge should have given me satisfaction—that a belief but yesterday grieving me should to-day bring gladness! The apparent anomaly is easily explained. It was the consequence of a change in the situation. My confidence in the success of our scheme had now become strengthened—almost to a certainty. So deftly had we taken our measures, that we need apprehend no great difficulty in attaining the end aimed at. Among the Saints, there was not the slightest suspicion of our character—at least none had yet shewn itself. We should be free to come and go, as we pleased: since the very nature of our contract required it. Camp and caravan would be alike accessible to us—at all hours, I might say—and surely opportunities would not be lacking for the accomplishment of our purpose.

Only one obstacle was worth regarding: the will of Lilian herself. She might still refuse to become a runaway? She might not consent to forsake her father? In that case, our efforts would be idle indeed!

Had I reason to expect such a perverse contingency? Surely not? Though my own influence might be gone—her sister would still have the power to persuade her? Her eyes once opened to the conspiracy that threatened her, but one thought could arise in that virtuous bosom—how to escape from it?

'No—no,' was my concluding reflection, spoken in soliloquy, 'there need be no fear of opposition in that quarter. True, Lilian is still a child; but her virtue is that of a virgin heart. Her sister's story, when told to her, will arouse her to a sense of her own danger. She will be ready, as we, to adopt measures for averting it.'

Drawing comfort from this reflection, I was turning to attend to my horse. The gallant creature had been sadly neglected of late, and needed my care. A huge Mexican *Silla*, that with its trappings half-covered his body, would have sufficiently disguised him; but I had not much fear of his being recognised. Stebbins and Holt had both seen him—once only, and then under such circumstances that it was scarcely possible they could have noticed him? Otherwise, they might have remembered him readily enough. Such a noble steed once seen, was not easily forgotten.

I had no fear, however; and was about to remove the saddle, when an object presented itself to my eyes that interrupted my intention, causing me to remain fixed and immobile. In the open ground, scarcely twenty paces from where I stood, was a form that fell upon the eye like a beam of empyrean light in the midst of deepest darkness—a girl of golden roseate hue, with a *chevelure* of yellow hair hanging to her haunches in all its lustrous luxuriance!

Scarce twenty paces separated me from Lilian Holt, for need I say that it was Lilian herself who was standing before me?

Instinctively, I noted changes. The wax-like smoothness, and, to a certain extent, the whiteness of her complexion, had yielded to the fervid rays of the prairie sun; but the slight embrowning appeared rather an improvement: as the bloom upon the peach, or the russet on the nectarine, proves the superior richness of the fruit. It had toned down the red upon her cheeks, but the glow was still sufficiently vivid.

I observed another change—in her stature. She had grown larger and taller—in both respects, almost equalling her sister—and resembling the latter in that full development of form, which was one of the characteristic features of her queen-like beauty.

These were the only changes external. Even the simple costume—the old homespun frock of yellowish stripe—still enveloped her form; no longer hanging loosely as of yore, but presenting a more sparing fit on account of the increased dimensions of the wearer. The string of pearls, too—false pearls, poor thing!—yet encircled her throat, whose now fuller outline was more capable of displaying them.

A pleasing reflection crossed my mind at the moment, that shaped itself into an interrogatory: might there have been no motive for further adornment?

As erst, her little feet were naked—gleaming with roseate translucence against the green background of the herbage.

She was standing when I first saw her: not in a position of rest, but with one foot pressing the turf, the other slightly retired, as if she had just paused in her steps. She was not fronting towards me, but half-turned. She appeared to have come as near as she intended, and was about going off again in an oblique direction; like the startled antelope, that, despite its timidity, stops to gaze upon the object that has alarmed it!

So short a time had my eyes been averted from the path by which she must have approached, I might well have fancied that she had suddenly sprung out of the earth—as Cytherea from the sea! Equally brilliant was the apparition—to me, of far more absorbing interest.

Her large eyes were fixed upon me in a gaze of wondering curiosity—a curiosity which the picturesque habiliments and savage character of my toilet were well calculated to provoke.

Her examination of me was soon ended; and she walked off in the direction towards which she had already turned her face. She seemed scarcely satisfied, however; as I observed that she looked repeatedly back. What thought was prompting her to this? Women have keen perceptions—an intuition almost equalling instinct in its perceptive power. Could she have a suspicion? No, no: the thing was improbable—impossible!

The path she was following would conduct her to the bank of the river—about a hundred yards above where our tents had been pitched, and a like distance from the nearest of the wagons. Her object in going thither was evident. A tin water-can, hanging by its iron handle over her wrist, proclaimed her errand.

On reaching the river, she did not proceed to fill the vessel, but placing it by the water's edge, sat down beside it. The bank, slightly elevated above the stream, offered a sort of projecting bench; and upon this she had seated herself—in such an attitude that her limbs hung over, until one foot was immersed in the water. Her long hair swept back upon the grass behind her; and with her head drooping forward, she appeared to gaze into the crystal depths of the stream—as intently, as if mirrored there she saw the form which her thoughts most delighted to dwell upon.

Up to this point, I had watched her every movement; but only by stealth and in silence: for I knew that eyes were upon me. Just then, however, most of the gazers had retired from our tents—a call to supper within the corral having summoned them away. For all that, I dared not go up to the girl. The act would have appeared strange; and even she might desire to shun the too free intrusion of my savage presence: perhaps flee from it altogether?

The opportunity of speaking with her was sufficiently tempting. Such another might not soon recur? I trembled at the thought of losing it. What was to be done?

I might have sent Marian? She was still inside her tent—where she had taken shelter from the bold glances of her vulgar admirers. She did not yet know that Lillian was outside. I might have given her notice of the circumstance, and deputed her to speak with her sister; but I had certain reasons for not following this course.

At this crisis, an idea occurred to me, that promised to aid me in obtaining the interview I longed for. My Arab had not yet been given to the grass!

Near where Lillian was seated, the herbage was luxuriant—more so than anywhere around. Upon it I could picket my steed, or hold him in hand, while he should browse?

I lost not a minute in removing the saddle, and adjusting the halter; and scarcely another in approaching the spot where the young girl was seated. I drew near, however, with due caution—fearful that by a too brusque approach I might hasten her departure.

I gave my horse to the grass, now and then guiding him with a short pull upon the halter, which I still held in my hand.

The young girl saw that I was gradually nearing her; and looked twice or three times towards me—not, as I fancied, with any air of alarm. Rather of interest, I thought; but this may have been only a fancy. My horse appeared to share it—indeed more than share it: since she fixed her eyes upon him frequently, and looked longer at him each time! Was it the noble form that was attracting her admiration? or was there something that called up a recollection? She might remember the horse!

'Oh! Lillian! would that I could speak to you as myself! How my heart yearns to give, and receive the token of recognition!

But no—not yet. I would not declare myself, till assured that that recognition might be welcome. Not till I could learn, whether the tender tie that bound our hearts was still unloosed—whether its too slender thread was yet unbroken! I had resolved to explore the secret chambers of her heart; and this it was that rendered me desirous of anticipating any interview that might occur with her sister. Perhaps too easily might I obtain the knowledge of which I was in search? I might reach, only to rue it?

As I drew near, my hopes of being permitted to speak with her increased. She still kept her seat, and made no attempt to shun me.

I had approached within speaking distance. Words were upon my tongue; when a harsh voice, coming from behind, interrupted, at the same instant, both my speech and my intention.

CAPTAIN SWING IN 1730.

TERROR every now and then, like Phœbus in the *Iliad*, comes out of her way to discharge her epideimical arrows and darts amongst the children of men. The 'dangerous classes' are the *sacerdotes* of this threatening goddess. Continually do they startle the 'party of order' by organising some new, resolute, and unexpected onslaught. Such was their famous garrotting movement, two or three winters ago; such was their famous burking movement, in the earlier part of this century. I need not trace backward the works of ruffianism from the nineteenth century to the Assassins, and from the Assassins to Cain; the reader's own memory, or his knowledge of social history, will furnish him, I am sure, with plenteous instances, great or small, of the epidemics of terror. To those, however, which he does know, I intend to add, in this paper, a slight sketch of an epidemic with which he is most likely not acquainted—an epidemic

whose history has never been gathered up—an epidemic which blanched the cheeks of his grandfather's grand-parents many an autumn night and winter night, as they laid themselves on their bed, in the years seventeen hundred and thirty, and seventeen hundred and thirty-one, *Georgio II. Rege*.

The epidemic to which I refer, is the once famous incendiarianism of the 'Society of Undertakers.' I have gathered the portrait of it from Dr Burney's immense collection of newspapers of the eighteenth century, now in the British Museum. Looking over the *Fog's Journals*, *Westminster Journals*, *Universal Chronicles*, *British Journals*, *London Journals*, *Grub Street Journals*, *Craftsmen*, *London Gazettes*, *Universal Spectators*, and a few other newspapers of 1730 and 1731, for quite another matter, my attention was arrested by the leading articles, letters, and continual items of news concerning the 'Incendiaries,' 'Bristol Firemen,' or 'Malicious Society of Undertakers.' I could not help thinking that a selection of these leaders, letters, and items, with elucidations, might prove interesting and useful to living readers.

First, then, for the general fact. A number of men, either clubbed together or alone, went about the country, leaving letters at certain houses, in which letters they demanded that the recipient should place in such or such a spot, at a particular hour, a stated sum of money, or other valuable. The depositor was to make no inquiry, to set no watch. If he failed to place the money, or if he set about inquiry, or placed a watch, his house was to be fired, and himself shot. The writers of these letters, then, got the name of 'The Incendiaries,' 'Bristol Firemen,' or 'Society of Undertakers.' Terror invariably magnifies her agents in the eyes of those to whom they are terrible; and so it was imagined at first that these incendiaries were an organised club, with great influence, and wonderful means of communication. They were supposed to have come from Ireland, prepared and fitted for their work. It was afterwards found, however, that, as with the garrotters, single ruffians took up the business upon their own private account. I have no doubt, too, that many of the threatening letters were the work of persons who had private pique to serve, and of amateur ruffians, a plentiful body of whom existed in the century of Mohocks, Hawkubites, and Hell-fire Clubs.

It began at Bristol. Early in September, a Mr Packer, a shipbuilder, living near 'the Butts,' received letter after letter, warning him that if he did not put six guineas in such and such a place (naming two or three places), he should be shot, and his house fired. He continued to receive these letters all the month. Other persons received letters of the same kind. At first, they were intimidated. Some, however, having complied with the proposal, and narrowly watched the appointed place, finding that none were hardy enough to come for the money, drew courage from that fact, and pooh-poohed the whole affair. But on the 4th of October, being Sunday, and the customary watchers away, the menace was put into execution so far as regarded Mr Packer. His house was fired at the cellar; the flames spread violently; the whole place was burned to the ground; and Mr Packer and his sister escaped with great hazard, and almost naked, to the house of a Mr Clements.

Every person who had received such letters now began to feel a real terror. The ships had almost caught fire at Mr Packer's conflagration; every ship-

builder in the town was frightened for his property, and all private persons were in consternation for their lives. The next day a letter was left at the house of Mr Clements by these invisible enemies, saying that they had been delighted spectators of the ruin of Mr Packer's property, but were grieved that he was not consumed with it. They assured him, however, that they should find means to effect that also before long.

The next week, a reward of a hundred pounds, with his majesty's pardon, was offered in the *London Gazette* to any one of the persons concerned, on condition of turning king's evidence against the other or others. To this the Chamber of Bristol added thirty-one pounds ten shillings, the Bristol Fire-office fifty pounds, and Mr Packer himself twenty guineas. Besides this, says a Bristol letter in the *Political State*, 'our magistrates are very assiduous in examining persons daily. Officers are appointed to search every house in the city and suburbs, and to oblige all suspected persons to give an account of themselves.* Several persons were taken up on suspicion both in Bristol and in Bath.

Meanwhile letters intimidatory continued to be thrown into shops and private houses. Mr Clements, with whom Mr Packer had hidden himself, was discovered to be his concealer; he had letters demanding the instant expulsion of Mr Packer, and threats to burn his house if he kept him any longer in it. Mr Packer, too, was exhorted not to buoy himself up with fancies of revenge; he 'shall not catch them,' they tell him, 'so long as Bristol stands. A ten thousand pound reward would not even make them known.' So Mr Packer retired privately from the city to a country-house of his, where a clergyman had an apartment. In a few days, this move was discovered; and the priest had an epistle commanding him to remove his books and effects, for that 'it is only out of respect to the cloth' that they are putting off the firing of the house. The originals of all these letters are given in the greater part of the newspapers of September and October 1730.

By the second or third week in November, the practice of sending these menacing letters had spread all over the country. The papers are filled with complaints from Chester, Brentford, Bridgewater, Marlborough, Hertford, Gloucester, Edinburgh, Spalding, Newark, and places as far distant from each other as these. In the end of November, the *Political State* complains that it has reached London; and the *British Journal* or *Censor*, of November 14, prints the two following letters, received by a bookbinder in the Strand: 1. 'Nov. 4, 1730.—SIR—I do command you to leave eight guineas at the corner of your door to-morrow night; which if you do, it shall be well; if not, by G-d, there shall remain a very few nights betwixt this and you and your whole family being entirely destroyed.' 2. 'Nov. 7, 1730.—You damnation dog, you and your brother not having answered the demand of a former letter, we swear by the blood of G-d, that unless you lay the aforesaid sum of eight guineas in the little hole coming at the bottom of your stairs, it is not in the power of heaven or hell to preserve you from this intended destruction. We should have destroyed you without this second letter, only we scrupled to destroy a whole neighbourhood; but now we are resolved to do it.'

How many houses were set on fire? The reader will be surprised, I fancy, when I say, that after looking through hundreds of newspapers, I have only found, with the exception of Mr Packer's, two—one at Hammersmith, the other at Stroud-water. Much fear, but little flame, was all the effect

produced by these incendiaries. It was the prominent social topic for six months or more; and had there been a *Punch* in those months, its John Leech would have played and pictured as wittily upon incendiarism, as we have seen him do upon garrotting. Men's fears seem always to outrun the subjects of those fears, in all such social panics. People slowly found out that these threats bore no fruit. They disbelieved the threats, and the threats ceased.

Judging from the internal evidence of the letters handed over to the different newspapers, I should conjecture that the writers of them might be divided into the following classes: 1. Those who really intended robbery and arson, the originators of the movement, in reality members of the 'dangerous classes,' the progenitors of our living burglars and garroters: 2. Hard-up rakes and ruined gamblers, who took to it (as we know they did to highway robbery in the time of the Georges) as a forlorn-hope or an experiment: 3. Mohocks, Hawkubites, or 'fast men' about town, whose delight and whole aim in life it was to play mischievously upon the timid, and who recognised in these incendiary epistles a new branch of spree: 4. Persons who had malicious piques against private acquaintances, and thought this a fine way of giving them sleepless nights. The correspondent of the *Political State* for December 1730, says that he has changed his opinion concerning them, and no longer believes them to be all of one gang, or to have any settled scheme. 'The general fright,' he writes, 'has put it into the head of every abandoned wretch throughout the whole country to take advantage thereof, and to endeavour to raise money, either for relieving them out of their necessities, or for supplying their extravagances.†'

A few specimens of the letters would thoroughly bear this out. Some are in a clownish dialect, and ill-spelled; others in the language of the highest fashion; others are a mass of oaths and oburgations; others humorous or poetical; indeed, a *Complete Threatening Letter-writer* might be formed from the several newspapers of that autumn and winter.

The following is an example of the ill-spelled sort: 'To Mr Rob. Hall an upholestrer at the angell in Hondich [Houndsditch]: Thees, Sir, I desire as youd sen me the sum of five pound, for to be lade under the lamppost, the corner of algate Church wall in hondich this night without fale, upon the penelty of Death to you or youre Wife, at the oure of seven or eaght of clock this present enstant November the 17 therefor Dont fale me for if you do I will sartanely be the death of you Robert hall and your wife.'

A letter from Nottingham, November 13, in all the newspapers, includes this poetical specimen, received by a Mr Spragging, a raft-merchant of Newark:

Spragging, remember thou art but dust,
And to thy neighbour very unjust;
Thou neither sticks at great nor small,
Till vengeance once does on thee fall.
I think how soon thou wilt be undone,
In flames of fire thy rafts shall burn,
And neither escape thy house nor thee.
Mark well these words, for I have said
What I intend when thou art in bed.

The third letter which I give, is a specimen of the most common kind of all—the oburgatory, condemnatory kind. If we could only see the original manuscript, I am sure we should find it in the genuine bold burglar hand. The writer, Jeremiah Hitch, was hanged at Hertford, February 1731, for producing and sending this amiable epistle: 'To GOODMAN

* Volume xl, October 1730.

† One was taken at Bristol—the first, indeed, convicted—the son of an attorney of good family.

† Vol. xl, page 590.

JENKINS, at Harpenden, in Htfordshire. Mr Jenkins, This, with my service to you, and I desire you of all love lay me L.30 at the bottom of the post next to Hen. Hudson's jun., a Friday night by 8 of the clock. And if you do not, I'll burn your house to ashes [oath]. And, [oath], if you watch, or declare this secret to anybody, [oath] if death shall not be your portion. [Oath] lay it at the post, and in a month I'll lay it for you again; and [oath] if you don't, I'll burn your houses and farms to the ground, and kill you upon sight—[oath] if I don't, day or night.

January 20, 1730 (1731).'

Six fearful imprecations to as many lines!

The next letter is a very good-tempered one, and cannot certainly have destroyed the receiver's sleep; it was sent to Mr Henry Crossgrove, printer of the *Norwich Gazette*—

If you do not put six new half-pence in farm,
Into an old shoe (we speak for no harm),
And place it upon the very top-stone
Of Christ Church high steeple, at midnight, alone,
We swear by Clim. Feltham, and honest Jack Fumm,
We'll drown you in claret, French brandy, or rum.
And if you set watches on the cock or cross-bar,
Take care how you act. Pray, be well aware,
And bind them fast on with a twist of fine silk,
Or your house shall be burnt with whey or fet-milk.
Our names are Tom Thumbkin, Will Wilkin, Bess Bodkin,
Pampilion, The Devil, and your servant, *Pad Hodkin*.

I have another letter, of the experimental kind, addressed to a dignitary of the church, Samuel Peploe, archdeacon of Richmond. The writer says that he is an acquaintance in great need, and must have ten guineas immediately. The threat he holds out on the non-compliance of the archdeacon is, 'I will murder your father, and rob him in his journey up to London.'

What was the cause of this singular outburst of ruffianism, and the universal paralysis of fear which it excited, in spite of the few houses really burned, the few persons really murdered? We, in whose time there is scarcely a yard of road, street, or lane which does not continually feel the tread of the policeman's feet, should say—want of a police. We are so used to the sight of those blue coats, and so safe and quiet through the presence of them, that we can scarcely imagine the weight of our debt to them, or form a lively and practical notion what England would rapidly become without the policemen. It is a fine moral and social sight, and it astonishes all foreigners, to see how a British crowd disperses when a policeman walks into the midst of it, although any two in the crowd could pinion the official, and render him ineffective in a moment. It shews how deep our unconscious reverence for law is—a reverence nowhere possible but where freedom is possible, and where law is a protector, and not a tyrant.

The leading-article writers of those old newspapers, out of which I have raised this forgotten episode, lay the blame of incendiarism upon three classes: first, upon the clergy—'whose business it is to examine every family within their respective parishes'—a work which the increase of population was even then making utterly impossible, save in country places; though, truly, the clergy of the eighteenth century were the worst, most careless clergy of all Christian ages, and scarcely knew the bounds of their parishes, nor any family in them where they could not have a good dinner. Second, upon the 'quality and gentry,' to whose looseness of conversation and manners at that time all the novels, comedies, and essays bear witness. Third, upon the 'great increase of lawyers:' 'the army of justice,' says

one, 'amounts now to thirty or forty thousand effective men, and like an army of priests, they are worse than a few, and neglect the chief end of their institution and existence.'

HOW DUMAS WROTE MONTE CRISTO.

PEOPLE are always very anxious, says M. Alexandre Dumas, in a recent pamphlet, to know how my works were composed, and above all, who wrote them, and naturally, those works that have attained the greatest success have had their paternity most obstinately questioned. It is generally believed that *The Count of Monte Cristo* was written by Fiorentino.

Let me here relate how I came to write that romance, a work which to this day still continues to be reprinted.

In 1841, I was living in Florence. In that year, Prince Jerome Napoleon was also living there, in the charming villa of Quarto, where every Frenchman was desirous of being presented on his first arrival at the 'City of the Medicis.' This formality had been gone through by me in 1834, so that, on my second visit to Florence in 1840, I found myself, as it were, on the footing of an old friend of the exiled family. I was in the habit, indeed, of going every day to visit the prince at Quarto.

One day, Prince Jerome said to me, alluding to his son: 'Napoleon is leaving the service of Wurtemberg, and is returning to Florence. He does not wish, as you can well understand, to run the risk of serving against France. So directly he arrives, I shall introduce him to you, that you may not only tell him all about France, of which he is ignorant, but also, if you have time, make with him some slight expeditions in Italy.'

'Has he seen the island of Elba?' I inquired.

'No.'

'Well, I will take him there,' I said, 'if your Highness thinks proper. It is but right that the nephew of the Emperor should finish his education by a historical pilgrimage like that.'

Therefore, when the Prince Napoleon arrived, he found everything arranged between his father and myself, and after a few days devoted to his family and friends, we set out in the prince's carriage for Leghorn. I was at that time eight-and-thirty, and the prince scarcely nineteen.

The next morning, at about five o'clock, we landed in a small boat in Porto-Ferraio, in Elba.

After having thoroughly wandered over the island, we resolved to make a shooting-expedition to Pianosa, a low island scarcely elevated ten feet above the level of the sea, abounding in rabbits and red partridges. Unfortunately, we had forgotten to bring a dog. A man, however, the happy possessor of a black and white cur, offered himself, in consideration of the sum of two pauls, to carry our game-bag, and to lend us his dog besides. By its assistance, we were enabled to kill a dozen partridges, which the owner of the dog very conscientiously picked up. As he put each partridge into his bag, the good man kept exclaiming, glancing with a sigh towards a magnificent rock two or three hundred feet high: 'Ah, your excellencies, if you went there, you would have capital sport.'

'Well, what is there to be got there, after all?' I asked him at last.

'Whole herds of wild-goats: the island is full of them.'

'And what is the name, then, of that happy island?'

'It is called *The Island of Monte Cristo*.'

This was the first time that I ever heard the name of Monte Cristo.

The next day, we set out for the island. The weather was beautiful, with just enough wind to fill the sail, which, seconded by the oars of our two sailors, made us do the three leagues in less than an hour. As we advanced, Monte Cristo seemed to rise from

the bosom of the sea, and increase gradually in size, like the giant Adamastor. At about eleven o'clock, we were within two or three pulls of the centre of a little port. We held our guns in our hands, ready to jump out, when one of the two rowers exclaimed: 'Your excellencies are doubtless aware that the island of Monte Cristo is deserted, and that at whatever port we enter after we have touched here, we shall be liable to five or six days of quarantine.'

'Well,' I said to the prince, 'what do you say to that?'

'I say,' he replied, 'that this man has done well to warn us before landing; but he would have done still better if he had warned us before setting out.'

'Then you don't think the five or six goats we may kill are worth suffering five or six days' quarantine?'

'And you?'

'I? Oh, I have no great passion for goats, and I have a great dislike for quarantine, so that if you don't object'—

'Well?'

'We will simply make the circumference of the island.'

'For what purpose?'

'To settle its geographical position.'

'Settle its geographical position,' said the prince, 'if you like; but what good will it do you?'

'It will serve,' I said, 'in memory of the voyage I have had the honour of making with you. It will serve to give the title of *The Island of Monte Cristo* to some romance I may hereafter write.'

'Let us make, then, the circuit of the island,' he replied; 'and send me the first impression of your work.'

Eight days afterwards, we returned to Florence. Towards the year 1843, being in France, I entered into an agreement with Messrs Bethune and Plon to write a work in eight volumes, called *Wanderings in Paris*. I had at first intended to have done the matter very simply, commencing at the Barrier du Trône, and finishing at the Barrier de l'Etoile; touching with the right hand the Barrier de Clichy, and with the left the Barrier du Maine; when one morning Bethune came to tell me, in his name, and in the name of his partner, that he did not intend to have a mere historical and archeological production, but that he meant to have a romance—about anything I liked, it is true, so long as it was interesting, but provided also that the wanderings in Paris formed no part of it. He had had his head turned by the success of Eugene Sue. As, however, it was just as easy for me to write a romance as to write my *Wanderings in Paris*, I set about to find materials for this work of Messrs Bethune and Plon.

I had some time previously read in *The Police Unveiled* of Peuchet a story about twenty pages in length, called, I believe, 'The Diamond and the Revenge.' Whatever it was, it was very foolish, and those who doubt it, had better read it. Nevertheless, at the bottom of that oyster there was a pearl—a rough pearl, without shape or value, it is true, but a pearl merely requiring the hand of the jeweller. I resolved to apply to the *Wanderings in Paris* the plot which I might draw from this story; so I set myself down, in consequence, to that work of the brain which with me always precedes the mere manual labour. The first outline of the plot was this:

A nobleman, very rich, dwelling in Rome, calling himself the Count of Monte Cristo, was to do some great service to a young French traveller, and, in exchange for the service, was to ask him to be his guide when he in his turn should visit Paris. The object of this visit to Paris was to have for appearance curiosity, but in reality revenge. In the course of his stay in Paris, the Count of Monte Cristo was to find out his secret enemies, who had condemned him in his youth to a captivity of six years. His fortune was to furnish him with the means of vengeance.

I commenced the work in this form, and I finished about a volume and a half of it. In that volume and a half are comprised all Albert de Morcerf's adventures in Rome, and those of Franz d'Epinay until his arrival in Paris.

I was just there when I happened to speak to Maquet, with whom I had already worked in collaboration. I told him what I had done, and what I still intended to do.

'I think,' he said, 'that you are passing over the most important part of the life of your hero—that is to say, over his amours with the Catalan, over the treason of Danglars and Fernand, and over the ten years in prison with the Abbé Faria.'

I answered: 'I intend to relate all that.'

He replied: 'You cannot tell it all in five or six volumes, and you have but five or six volumes left.'

'Perhaps you are right,' I said. 'Come and dine with me to-morrow, and we will talk about it.'

During that evening, that night, and the next morning, I thought over Maquet's remarks, and they appeared so true, that they prevailed over my previous intentions. So, when he came the next day, he found the work cut out into three distinct parts—Marseille, Rome, Paris.

That same evening, we made together the plan of the first five volumes: one of them was to be devoted to the introduction, three to the captivity, and the last two to the escape and recompense of the Morella. The remainder, without being entirely finished, was quite planned out.

Maquet believed he had done me only a friendly service; I maintain that he did the work of a collaborateur.

Thus *The Count of Monte Cristo*, commenced by me in my *Wanderings in Paris*, turned by degrees into a romance, and found itself at last completed by Maquet and myself together.

Every one, though, is yet at liberty to find in *The Count of Monte Cristo* any other source than I have said; but he will be very clever if he finds one.

Thus is briefly told, by the author himself, the origin of the most remarkable romance of our time; and we waive our ordinary rule against the admission of translations, in order that, by its publication, the fame of M. Dumas may be cleared from certain charges of plagiarism in the eyes of many whom his own statement would never reach.

A MODERN NIMROD.

It was one of the paradoxical sayings of Lord Byron, that he could pick out half-a-dozen young aristocrats from any drawing-room who should write as well as so many professed littérateurs; and this remark, so permissible in a Lord and a Genius, has been since echoed not only by those of his own order—which was of course to be looked for—but even by some littérateurs themselves, who happening to be also men of property and position, have professed to stand by the 'gentlemanly interest,' at some little sacrifice of truth. No estimate can of course be formed of what such magnificent persons, as those to whom his lordship referred, could do 'if they pleased'—although for that sort of conditional performance they have generally an immense reputation—but when they do please, and venture upon writing books, the absurdity of the assertion is commonly made evident enough. The art of writing is indeed scarce more likely to belong to an amateur who has never tried it, than that of playing upon the violoncello or of taming snakes. It is possible that tyros may be very successful in both those accomplishments, but the odds are that they will get out of tune, or be bitten in the eye. Examples of this are numerous and convincing, in books upon all subjects, but especially so in modern works upon field-sports. The Muscular Christians for the most

part do write good grammar, but these mere Musclemen, as some wit has called them, write nothing of the sort. That a man can tell his own story—the adventure that has happened to him personally—best (that is to say, in the most interesting manner), is no less a delusion because it is popular; and that he can write it best, is a still greater error.

Thrilling as many of the narratives of our 'gentlemen-sportsmen' often are, which have been presented to us of late in such profusion, their tedium—for they all are tedious too—would have been greatly relieved by judicious editing. They are usually stored with a quantity of stale quotations, such as even persons who are ignorant of the very names of the books from which they come, are acquainted with; inverted commas usurp in them the place which italics used to occupy in those ancient volumes wherein the authors seem to be so afraid of our forefathers missing the jokes; while well-known lines of Greek, Latin, and even French, give mustiness to the pages to which they are intended to give piquancy.

In the really most interesting volume now before us,* treating of personal combat with almost every formidable creature extant, and written by a gentleman not ashamed to call himself the Old Shekarry (Indian for hunter), the venerable remark, *Mais revenons à nos moutons*, is repeated, as our author would say, *ad nauseam*. It is not 'mouton,' but lion, tiger, elk, elephant, and eagle, to which the writer always returns, and therefore the phrase has not even truth to recommend it; is it possible that he imagines it has novelty? Moreover, like Mr Gordon Cumming, the great progenitor of all these writing Nimrods, he does not know when he is brutal—when his narratives of destruction disgust rather than enthrall. He thus describes the end of a female bear whom he has wounded: 'She, however, soon got up again, raised herself on her haunches, uttering a peculiarly melancholy cry, and looked round in a most woebegone manner.' This position offered me a splendid shot, and I finished her career with a ball from my second gun.' And again, he dilates upon the slaughter of a female elephant, who would have escaped him, but that he hit upon the device of shooting her little one, whom she was tenderly 'helping over some rough ground,' after the loss of which, the mother thought no more of her own safety.

We should not notice these defects in what is the best book of its kind that we have read these five years, but that there are two foolish notions abroad which need refutation: one we have already referred to; the other is, that the continual and professional blood-shedding of the brute creation does not blunt a man's sensibilities, but is, upon the whole, rather good for him. Having entered our protest against these two popular paradoxes, there is only left to us the agreeable office of giving praise. The Old Shekarry has wandered, rifle in hand, from British India to Circassia, slaying all things from the Bengal Tiger to the Lammgerieir of ten feet from tip to tip of wing. A tiger is a tiger, but when he becomes a habitual man-eater, he sinks even lower in the scale of civilisation. He is like a drunkard who, having tasted gin, is always after the bottle. It is an Indian saying, that when this animal has once lapped human blood, he will follow no other game but man. He becomes desperately cunning, as though he were aware of having declared war against the wisest of enemies. It is of no further use picketing bullocks for his accommodation, for he will carry off the man who is watching them, and leave the herd untouched. It therefore, of course, did the Old Shekarry's heart good to hear of a gentleman of this kind being in his neighbourhood, who had already eaten well-nigh a hundred persons, and especially

no less than sixteen postmen—a class of which he seemed to be particularly fond. The villagers in his vicinity were panic-stricken, inquiring haughtily, indeed, 'Who is this tiger of deified fathers, that he should thus cast dirt on our beards?' but doing nothing towards his extermination. Our hunter hears that a poor woman has been carried off one morning from a well where she was drawing water, and immediately starts in pursuit of the despoiler. 'I noticed that the trail of his retreat did not lead in the same direction as that from whence he came, and he seemed to have made the circuit of the village two or three times before he fell in with his victim. I followed the marks of his pugs through some rather open custard-apple jungle, to the dry sandy bed of a nullah, or water-course, where the trail was very plain; and although there were no marks of blood to be seen, yet I knew that he had still carried his victim, as the pugs of his forefeet were more deeply imprinted in the sand than those of the hind, from the extra weight he carried in his mouth, whereas I have observed that the marks of the hind feet are generally the plainest. A little further on, I perceived a large patch of dry blood, round which the flies were buzzing, and from the marks in the sand, I knew that the brute had laid down the body of his victim for a moment, in order, perhaps, to get a better grip.' Presently, 'we distinctly heard grating sounds, like the gnawing of bones, accompanied by low snarls and growls. I noticed Chiniah's eyes sparkling with excitement, as he lay listening to the ominous noises; and the convulsive grabs he made at the few bristles which adorned the point of his chin told me what was passing in his mind. Not a word was spoken, though I saw the eyes of the gang were following my movements.' This was not, however, the tiger himself, but a couple of jackals munching and tearing the flesh from some victims he had not quite devoured, and whom he had left in his den. 'This was evidently the hecatomb of the man-eater, for I counted, from skulls and remains of half-eaten bodies, about twenty-three victims of both sexes, as we could see, from the hair, clothes, broken bangles (armlets), and gold and silver ornaments belonging to native women. We picked up two massive silver bracelets belonging to his last victim, whose fresh remains exhibited marks of tattooing, which were recognised by one of the villagers who was with us. We also found two gold "teekas," or neck ornaments, which mark the married woman, and a knife, which the dhooby assured us he knew as having belonged to a post-runner who had been killed about a month before.'

As the tiger was not at home, and could not be got at by the usual means, the Old Shekarry actually disguises himself as one of its favourite postmen. To the end of the bamboo on which the *dauk* runners sling the mail-bags on their shoulders, an iron ring with pieces of metal is attached, 'making a jingling noise as the man runs, which gives warning of the coming of the post to any crowd that might be obstructing the path, allowing them time to get out of his way. Having broken off the ring, I fastened it to my belt, so as to allow it to jingle as I walked; and, arming myself with a short double rifle by Westley Richards, a brace of pistols, and a huge shekar knife, I made Kistimah lead the way down the road towards the place where the man-eater was said to lurk.'

The Hunter thus voluntarily becoming 'live bait,' goes upon this quite unparalleled expedition alone. 'The sun had almost set as I proceeded slowly down the road, and although I was perfectly cool, and as steady as possible, I felt cold drops of perspiration start from my forehead as I approached the spot where so many victims had been sacrificed. I passed the rock, keeping well on the look-out, listening carefully for the slightest sound, and I

* *The Hunting-ground of the Old World*. By the Old Shekarry. Saunders and Olney. 1860.

remember feeling considerably annoyed by the chirping made by a couple of little bulbuls (Indian nightingales), that were fighting in a bush close to the roadside. Partridges were calling loudly all around, and as I passed the water-course, I saw a jackal skulking along its bed. I stopped, shook my jingling affair, and listened several times as I went along, but to no purpose. Whilst ascending the opposite side of the ravine, I heard a slight noise like the crackling of a dry leaf: I paused, and turning to the left, fronted the spot from whence I thought the noise proceeded. I distinctly saw a movement or waving in the high grass, as if something was making its way towards me: then I heard a loud purring sound, and saw something twitching backwards and forwards behind a clump of low bush and long grass, about eight or ten paces from me, and a little in the rear. It was a ticklish moment, but I felt prepared. I stepped back a couple of paces, in order to get a better view, which action probably saved my life, for immediately the brute sprang into the middle of the road, alighting about six feet from the place where I was standing. I fired a hurried shot ere he could gather himself up for another spring, and when the smoke cleared away I saw him rolling over and over in the dusty road, writhing in his death-agony, for my shot had entered the neck, and gone downwards into his chest. I stepped on one side, and gave him my second barrel behind the ear, when dark blood rushed from his nostrils, a slight tremor passed over all his limbs, and all was still. The man-eater was dead, and his victims avenged. This creature, one is glad to learn, was covered with mange, and 'had but little hair left on his skin, which was of a reddish brown, and not worth taking.' On the spot where he was killed a large mausoleum now stands, caused by the passers-by each throwing a stone there; and the name of the Hunter is held dear in all that neighbourhood as the friend of humanity.

After this, a female bear seems quite an insignificant hand-to-hand customer, and yet one was almost the death of the Old Shekarry. 'I was directly in her path, and with a roar, she made right at me; I let drive at her head with my only barrel that had not been discharged; but it failed to stop her, and she had knocked me down, and was on me in the twinkling of an eye. The slope of the hill was steep, and we both of us rolled over and over several times. I was almost breathless, when Googooloo rushed on her with his bill-hook, and endeavoured to attract her attention. Luckily, she could not bite at all, as my shot had smashed her snout and lower jaw to pieces; but she kept me locked in her embrace, and squeezed me more roughly than affectionately. My head was well protected with a bison-skin cap; and getting a tight grasp of her fur on each side, with my arms underneath hers, so that she could not do me much injury with her claws, I regularly wrestled with her for some time; and although I brought my science to play, and threw her on her back several times, "by giving her the leg" she never let go her hug, and I was almost suffocated with the quantity of blood and froth that came from her wound, and covered my face, beard, and chest.' The Shekarry's hunting-knife, however, at last releases him, and off he starts at once, though with a clawed ankle, after more bears.

It is highly advisable, when shooting at a bull-elephant, to make sure of killing him, for a wounded one, it seems, is perhaps the most dangerous of all wild animals. 'I threw up my rifle, and, aiming behind the ear, let drive a couple of snap-shots for the chance of stopping him, the last of which took effect, for it brought him to his knees; but he immediately regained his legs, and, separating from the females, tore frantically through the forest, which he made resound with his angry roar. I snatched my second spare gun from Googooloo (a heavy two-ounce double rifle), and,

jumping down the bank, ran with all speed to cut him off at the gorge, which was extremely narrow, as the torrent made its way between a huge cleft in the rock, through which I knew he must pass in order to join the rest of the herd. I was running down the bed of the stream, on either side of which rose high banks, when I heard a rattling noise among the stones behind me, and on turning my head, I saw the wounded bull tearing after me, with his eyes flashing fire, and his tail straight on end, about forty paces distant.

'Speed I knew would not avail me; he would have been down upon me before I could have clambered up the bank, so I swung round, and dropped on my knee, to take a more steady aim. On he charged with a fiendish shriek of revenge. I let him come to within fifteen paces, when I let drive, aiming between his eyes (my favourite shot); but whether it was that I was unsteady, being breathless from my run, or that my rifle, which weighed sixteen pounds, was too heavy, I know not; but my left arm dropped the moment I pulled the trigger (not from nervousness, for I was perfectly cool, and never lost my presence of mind for a moment), and my shot took effect four inches too low, entering the fleshy part of the root of the trunk, instead of penetrating the brain. It failed to stop him, and before I could get out of the way, the huge brute was on me; I saw something dark pass over me, felt a severe blow, and found myself whizzing through the air; then all was oblivion.' The Old Shekarry had been 'tossed' over a high bank into a place of comparative safety, if he would but have stayed there, but that was not in his nature. 'In the dry bed of the nullah, I saw my rifle, and after much painful exertion, managed to crawl down and get it. The muzzle was filled with sand, which I cleared out as well as I could; and then, sitting by the edge of the stream, began to wash away the blood, and bathe my face and head. Whilst so employed, I heard a piercing shriek, and saw Googooloo rushing towards me, closely followed by the infuriated elephant, who was almost mad from the pain of his wounds. Luckily, a hanging branch was in his way, and with the agility of a monkey, he caught hold of it, and swung himself up the steep bank, where he was safe.

'The elephant, balked of his victim, rushed wildly backwards and forwards two or three times, as if searching for him, and then, with a hoarse scream of disappointment, came tearing down the bed of the nullah. I was directly in his path, and powerless to get out of the way. A moment more, and I saw that I was perceived, for down he charged on me with a fiendish roar of vengeance. With difficulty I raised my rifle, and, taking a steady aim between his eyes, pulled the trigger—it was my only chance. When the smoke cleared away, I perceived a mighty mass lying close to me. At last I had conquered. Soon after this, I must have sunk into a swoon, for I hardly remember anything until I found myself lying in my hut, and B—leaning over me.'

There are creatures much smaller than elephants which help to make the Indian jungles dangerous, and which set the hunter's rifle at defiance. 'Tree-leeches often drop from the branches as you shake them in passing, and alight upon your person, when they seem all to make for the back of your neck by instinct. When in such jungles, it is absolutely necessary to wear leech-gaiters, or long closely woven cotton stockings, over your socks (which should be of lambs-wool), under your boots and gaiters, and over your breeches, as far as they will go. Even with this safeguard, I have sometimes found my boots and stockings drenched with blood in the evening, though I could not ascertain how they got in.'

The volume we write of is a large one, and contains many more such scenes as we have quoted, but we must confine ourselves to one more extract. It is a story told to our author by an Abbassian chief, who,

during the winter of 1852, was traversing a snowy steppe, with ten other mounted men of his tribe, well armed, and five prisoners—four Russian soldiers and a woman. All on a sudden, a strange howling noise was heard in the air, as the roaring of a dreadful wind, and they beheld a dark mass of objects, like a cloud on the horizon, spreading over the snow. Then they knew that they were pursued by a horde of wolves.

'Their horses were already fatigued with a long day's journey, but terror seemed to give them wings, for they tore along as if they knew their peril, and for awhile seemed to hold their own. The nearest hamlet was at least seven miles distant, and the ground was in many places so deep with drifted snow that their horses could hardly get along. The crisis was now evidently fast approaching, for the advanced troop were almost within gunshot howling and yelling as wolves only can. A brief consultation was held, and it was determined to sacrifice the prisoners one by one, so as to gain time for the rest to escape. The woman met her fate first; one of their number stepping behind, drew his sabre across the hocks of her horse, hamstringing it, and causing both to fall heavily to the ground. Her shrieks, as well as the cry of the horse in his death-agony, rang through their ears for a moment, and then all was still. They anxiously looked back, and found that this desperate expedient had enabled them to gain a considerable distance on their pursuers, but it was not for long; they were soon again on their heels, when a Russian soldier was sacrificed by shooting his horse; a second, third, and fourth followed, and much time was gained and a considerable distance covered: still their insatiable foes pressed on, apparently more ferocious than before, for their appetite was whetted with the taste of blood. They now commenced discharging their firearms amongst them, but it was of no avail, for although many fell, the rest rushed on, and the course of the horde was not stayed. The horses of two of their number now gave up, and fell with shrieks that told they knew the fate that awaited them; and, although their riders were swift on foot, they could not keep up their speed for any length of time in the deep snow, and soon became fatigued, so bidding their comrades farewell, they resigned themselves to their *kismet* (destiny), drew their yataghans, and, shouting their battle-cry, died like men, fighting to the last. The survivors were now within a couple of miles from shelter, but their horses were almost worn out, the leading wolves hardly a pistol-shot behind, and gaining upon them rapidly—another moment, and they expected to feel their fangs, when an old man, whose two sons were also present, seeing the hopelessness of the case, bade his comrades farewell, and shouting out the *imaun* (Mohammedan creed) as a death-song, felled his horse to the ground with the heavy butt of his pistol, as he could not rein up the scared animal, and offered himself a willing sacrifice to save the rest. On tore the survivors, now reduced to eight in number, and on followed their relentless pursuers, now again only half-a-dozen horses' length behind. In spite of all their efforts, their doom seemed sealed, and their case hopeless, when their chief, giving an expressive look to the narrator, drew his pistol, and shot the man nearest to him through the head. He threw up his arms and dropped the reins, but although stone-dead, he sat firm in the saddle, the affrighted animal carrying him until a second discharge brought both to the ground. Again the pursuit was checked for a time, and the *konak* appeared in view; luckily, the door was open, for it was deserted; men and horses rushed in, the door was closed, and a ponderous bar drawn across inside, when suddenly a loud heart-rending yell was heard from without, above the howling of the wolves, and they saw through the chinks between the logs one of their comrades, whose horse

had broken down and lagged behind, unperceived by the rest, surrounded by the horde, and fighting desperately—a moment more, and he was pulled from the saddle, and both man and horse devoured before their eyes. Then the wolves surrounded the hut, and, finding themselves balked of their prey, began to fight amongst each other, at times endeavouring to scratch away the earth under the logs, or force their ways through the crevices; but the hut being substantially constructed, resisted all their efforts, and a deadly discharge of firearms was kept up from the interior, which thinned their numbers, and revenged their fallen friends; but the dead wolves were speedily devoured by the survivors, who remained howling and shrieking round the hut until the night of the second day, when a violent storm arose, and they took themselves off in the dark, much to the relief of the six survivors, who, seeing the coast clear, made the best of their way to their homes.'

We thus take leave of the Old Shekarry with a picture the reverse of those with which his volume teems—of Men pursued by Beasts, instead of Beasts by Men; and, if we may reason from analogy, this hunting seems to be very far from sport for those who are hunted.

F A L L E N.

WHAT were once her graces,
Now are but her wiles;
Fair as aye her face is—
But how changed her smiles!
More would tears become her,
Than that fellowship
Of the heart woo-laden
And the laughing lip.

Better far be weeping,
Than with that sad smile,
Which, once sure to win us,
Now doth scarce beguile;
For the heart-light hath taint
Whence the smile flashed forth,
But the fountain of tears—
That can nought defile.

Gather we the sea-flower,
And tend it as we may,
Its purple glory faded,
And pineth for the spray;
And gather we the sea-flower,
And watered though it be,
Its fairy branches spread not
As erst beneath the sea.

'E'en so a maiden's beauty
Must lose its charm and air,
Without the salt of Modesty
Within, to keep it fair.

EMERITUS.

On Saturday, the 5th of January 1861, will be
commenced in this Journal,

A STORY,

ENTITLED

THE FAMILY SCAPEGRACE.

BY JAMES PAYN,

Author of 'The Bateman Household,' &c. &c.

To be continued every week until completed.

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